

Clerk

Clerks are the engine that keeps the NHS running successfully. They make sure our patients have the information they need for their care and our healthcare professionals can access crucial patient records.

"Having a good knowledge of using computers and being familiar with the windows programmes helped me settle in a lot better than I thought."

[Read Ken's story](#) ^[1]



Working life

You'll support our patients and clinical staff, such as surgeons, GPs and nurses. You'll work in areas such as:

- hospital wards
- specialist departments or clinics, including cancer centres or accident and emergency units
- GP surgeries and health centres
- the headquarters of an NHS trust
- health records department

Depending on where you work, you could be:

- booking patients in for appointments or their transport to and from hospital
- chasing up reports
- inputting patient data
- the first point of patient contact by answering the phone or emails

You may spend your time on a particular type of work and your job title may reflect this. For example:

Apprenticeships logo

- clerk/typist
- reception clerk/receptionist
- clinical coding clerk
- admissions clerk
- ward clerk
- clinic clerk

Your role could mean a lot of contact with patients, their relatives, carers and healthcare professionals. Alternatively, if you work in health records departments or headquarters, there'll be very little public contact.

Entry requirements, skills and interests

There are no set entry requirements to become a clerk. Employers usually expect good literacy, numeracy and IT skills. They may ask for GCSEs or equivalent qualifications. For some jobs, employers may ask for other skills or qualifications such as word processing or data entry.

Employers often ask for relevant work experience. Even where this is not specified, it would be an advantage if you have worked in an admin or customer service role.

There are often opportunities to enter administrative roles in the NHS and other areas of healthcare, through an apprenticeship or traineeship. [2]

Personal characteristics

You need to be:

- accurate and methodical
- able to work in a team but use their own initiative
- willing to follow instructions and procedures
- able to work with all types of people
- confident using the phone

Skills required

- good organisation skills
- communication skills
- IT skills
- customer service skills

Training and development

You will get the training you need to do the job. This includes an introduction to the department, how to use the IT and phone equipment and the procedures to follow. You may also have training in customer care.

Clerks working on a ward or in a clinic or health centre have a lot of contact with patients.

You may be offered the chance to take vocational qualifications such as those from:

- the Association of Medical Secretaries, Practice Managers, Administrators and Receptionists ^[3] (AMSPAR)
- the British Society of Medical Secretaries and Administrators ^[4] (BSMSA)

You could become a member of AMSPAR or BSMSA. They offer training, online forums and newsletters so staff can network with others doing the same type of work.

Career development

With experience, you could become a team leader, coordinating the work of a team of clerks. With further experience, you could become a manager, responsible for the staff in the department.

You could move into specialist roles such as a medical secretary ^[5], finance ^[6] or HR ^[7]. You may also have the opportunity to move into informatics, specialising in electronic data, or into IT.

Pay and benefits

You'll work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. Some clerks may work shifts, which could involve early starts, nights, evenings and weekends. Administrative staff in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change ^[8] (AfC ^[9]) pay system. You would typically start on AfC ^[9] band 2 and could progress, with further training and qualifications to posts at bands 3 or 4, for example as a medical secretary ^[5].

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Other roles that may interest you

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- [Medical secretary/personal assistant](#) ^[11]
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- [Secretary/typist](#) ^[13]

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